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America's 'glorious failures' deserve a salute

By Roger Simon
Chicago Sun-Times

I have done some pretty awful things in the name of American journalism. I have rushed up to interview mothers who have lost children, husbands who have lost wives, families shattered by a variety of emotional and physical calamities.

All reporters do these things. They wear a protective cloak of professional indifference while they write the names and ages and addresses in their notebooks. The deed is done quickly and quickly forgotten.

But I am going to have a hard time forgetting a long, cinder-block corridor in a small Wisconsin town that led to a bare, large room where eight girls sat on folding chairs facing a television set.

No accident had befallen these girls. No one had died or gone to jail or been shot.

What had happened to these girls is that they had failed. They had wanted to be Miss America and now they never would be.

I had come to do a magazine article on the American

Insight

Dream and I had really come half expecting to make fun of the kind of girl who would engage in anything as ridiculous as a beauty pageant.

I interviewed each contestant about her hopes and dreams and found each shockingly bright, articulate and candid.

But on the last night, the smiling stopped. The names of the finalists were read and the eight losers ran offstage and were led to a room where they could watch the victors on television.

I couldn't make myself go into the room. I knew them too well by then.

I walked past the door three or four times and turned away. And then, I just did it and plunged through the doorway as they swiveled on their chairs to look at me.

They still wore their evening gowns, some in red, others in white, others in blue. I had gotten to know them by the names of the Wisconsin towns they represented, and that is the way I think of them still.

Miss Watertown — Mary Elizabeth Noon — who had the brightest smile and cheeriest outlook, spoke one of the two thoughts that were dominating each of their minds.

"I just feel bad for my town," she said, fiddling with the hem of her gown. "I feel I let them down. I feel I let all the people down."

Miss Sheboygan — Janice Kay Sadler — the girl I secretly had been rooting for, spoke the second thought. "I don't know how I will face the people who came here to see me," she said. "I'm dreading the moment."

I wish I could have told them then what I feel now. That they, at a very tender age, had branded themselves as failures in a nation whose national religion is success. They were true dreamers of the American Dream, and now they were paying for it. And it is ironic, considering our nation's history, that this should be true.

America was a country founded by failures who could not get along in the Old World and who came to a wilderness because there was simply no place else to go.

America was a country settled by failures — pioneers who could not adjust to the crowded life of the Eastern Seaboard and who went West because there was no place else for

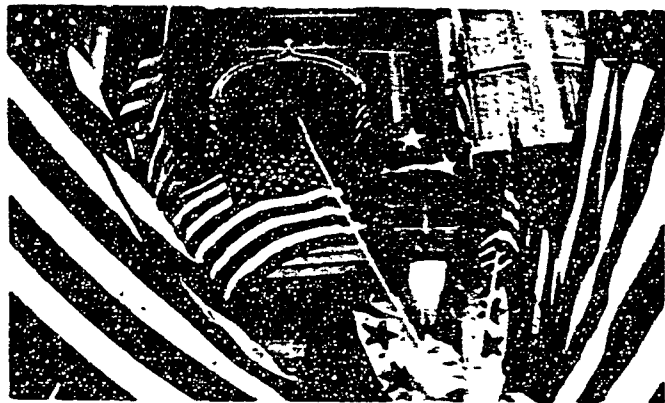
them. America was a country built by failures — men and women who never attained the dream of owning their own business and being their own boss. Men and women whose lives were ruled by the alarm clock in the morning and the factory whistle in the evening.

Years and years of history books have taught us that America was shaped by the great deeds of great men. It was not. America was shaped by the deeds of ordinary men.

On the Fourth of July, 1969, at the height of the Vietnam War and after the invasion of Cambodia, I refused to stand up for the playing of the national anthem.

I didn't know then what I have learned since. That America — thank God — always has been better than its government, that its people have always been more decent than their presidents and that the strength and greatness of this nation lies in them, the men and women who are not great and who never will be.

So on this Fourth of July — for Miss Watertown and Miss Sheboygan and for all the other glorious failures who have made and sustained this country — on this day, I stand for them.



Scott Pritikin, Frisco flag waver

Nation's woes take back seat for holiday

United Press International

The energy crisis, inflation, truckers' woes and other national maladies will take a back seat Wednesday to a traditional old-fashioned Independence Day, featuring parades, picnics and fireworks.

The nation's 203rd birthday is being billed as a stay-at-home holiday, partly because of the large number of gasoline stations slated for closing and because this year's event is a one-day holiday and not tacked onto a weekend.

While traditional celebrations were planned for nearly every community, two major changes were in store for tradition-rich Boston.

For the first time in a half-century, Arthur Fiedler, the Boston Pops' 63-year-old maestro, will not be conducting the holiday concert because he is suffering from a heart ailment. Harry Ellis Dickson will stand in his place.

Also, the projected 100,000 revelers will not be treated to a fireworks display because of crowd-control problems in previous years and the large volume of vandalism complaints received from Back Bay residents along the Charles River.

Chicago and Dallas also may be somewhat quieter than usual. A grand jury in Chicago returned a precedent-setting indictment accusing a couple of stashing more than a ton (.9 metric tons) of illegal fireworks in their suburban home.

allegedly to sell to neighborhood children. The fireworks were confiscated.

A district judge in Dallas refused to stop city and suburban authorities from spying on customers of a fireworks stand and then arresting them when they cross city lines with their illegal loot. Rebecca Miller, 26, operates the stand legally outside the city. But fireworks are illegal in Dallas and some suburban communities.

Speedboat races, street festivals and musical events were in store for parade-loving New Yorkers, capped by the floating fireworks display in the Hudson River. City transit

(See FUEL, Page 14A)

Fuel price hits \$1.03 in Columbia

By Dorie Vath
Missourian staff writer

Well, it finally happened. Gasoline prices in Columbia have jumped to more than a dollar for self-serve regular gasoline.

The jump occurred Monday afternoon at Columbia Zephyr, Paris Road and Vandiver Drive. The price of self-serve regular at the station went from 86.9 cents a gallon to \$1.03 a gallon at 2 p.m. Monday.

Ron Carlyle, owner of Columbia Zephyr said the price jump was caused by a temporary shut-off of regular gasoline to the Zephyr Company by the company's distributor, J.D. Street and Company, Inc., of St. Louis. This distributor is one of the major gasoline suppliers for farmers in the mid-Missouri area.

Carlyle said the Zephyr Company was forced to buy gasoline on the open market.

"The price for gas on the open market is over 100 cents a gallon for regular," he said. "So that is why I'm charging 103 cents." He said he expects the price to go down again sometime next week.

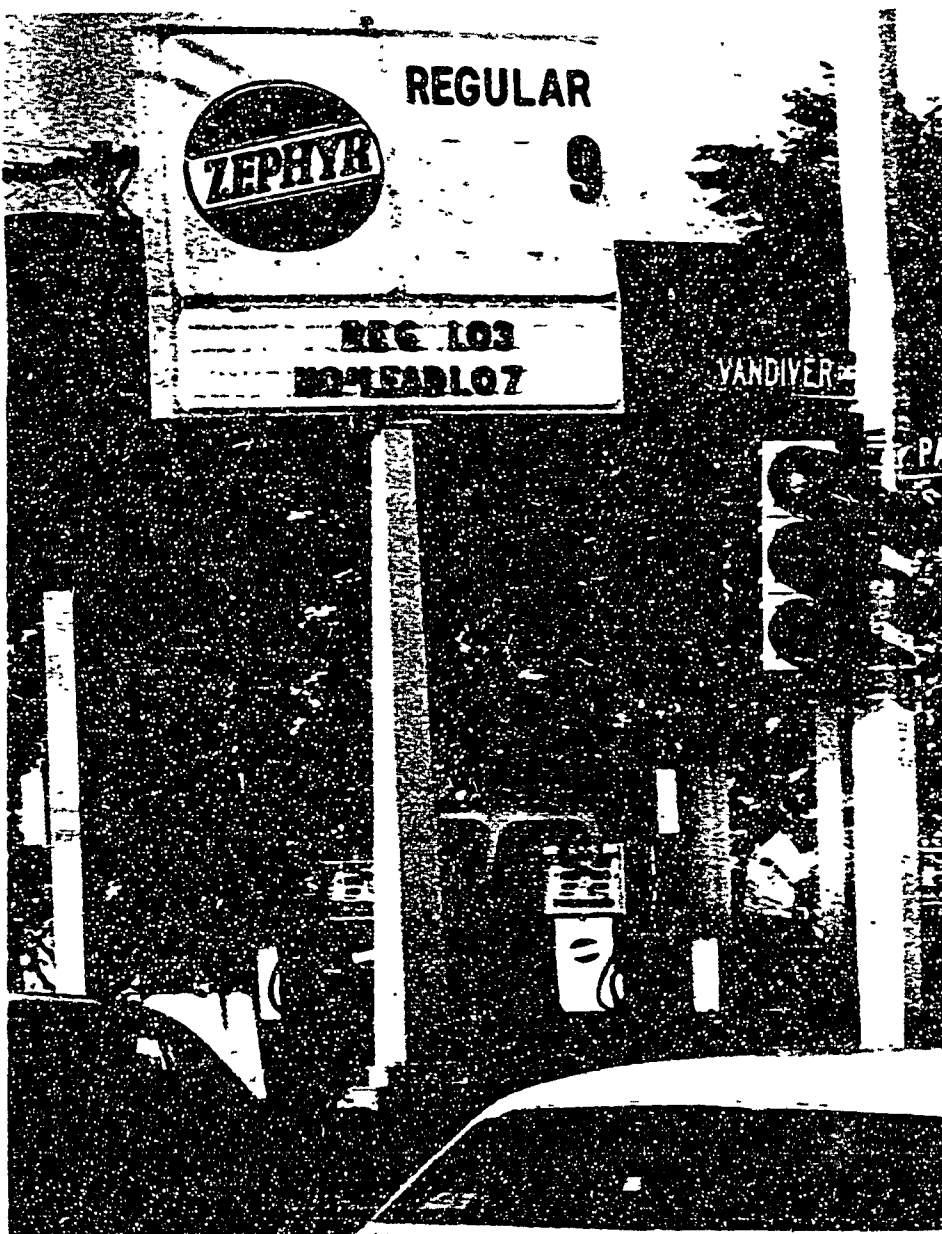
"We don't want to sell at this price, but we have to. As soon as our distributor starts supplying us again, prices for regular gas should return to normal," Carlyle said.

The price jump at Columbia Zephyr has met with mixed reactions from motorists.

"I figured prices would go up for the holiday," one Columbia motorist said.

"But it's the people who run the oil companies that want to make the money, not the people who own the stations."

Another motorist, C.B. Miller of Sturgeon, Mo., said he was determined to check around and buy gasoline



It's dollar gas for these customers

wherever it was cheapest.

According to a survey conducted last month by the Missouri Department of Consumer Affairs, consumers can save at least 4 cents a gallon on regular gasoline by shopping around for self-service pumps where prices are decidedly cheaper.

A part-time attendant at Columbia Zephyr assured Zephyr customers that

they were lucky to pay only \$1 for regular gasoline.

"A couple of people have told me that they have to pay \$1.35 cents a gallon in St. Louis for self-serve regular gas," the attendant said.

One factor will work in the motorist's favor during the Fourth of July driving today — the Zephyr station won't be open to sell its dollar-plus gas.

Local lenders welcome 'floating' interest rate

By Ed Dorian
Missourian staff writer

In rapid-fire response to a new law lifting the 10 percent interest ceiling on home mortgage loans, at least one area savings and loan association Tuesday raised its mortgage loan rate and accepted new home loan applications for the first time in almost 10 months.

Other local lenders, home builders and realtors breathed a general sigh of relief after learning that Gov. Joseph Teasdale has signed the controversial bill allowing for a "floating" mortgage loan rate set at 3 percent above the interest rate of U.S. Treasury bonds. Prior to passage of the bill, Missouri law set a limit of 10 percent on loans.

Savings and loan officials estimate that the new formula would mean home mortgage interest rates will go up to around 11.6 percent.

"We haven't accepted any new (mortgage loan) applications since last November," said Jack Baker, president of Citizens Savings Association, based in Mexico, Mo.

But Tuesday, for the first time in almost 10 months, the Columbia branch of Citizens Savings accepted new applications.

"My loan officer came in today and said we would be taking in two to three million (dollars) in loan applications," before the end of the week, Baker said.

Baker said applications were accepted at most of the association's 32 Missouri branches, including the Columbia branch at Crossroads West Shopping Center.

Baker could not say what the new interest rate would be, but noted "it would not be at the (11.6 percent) maximum."

Representatives of three other area savings and loans said they, too, would swiftly move to raise mortgage interest rates.

"It will cause an increase in the (home mortgage interest) rate, no doubt about it," said Wendell Mustain, president of the Centralia-based Boone County Federal Savings and Loan Association. A new rate "will go into effect immediately on all new applications. Any new applications we've taken in since last week were taken on an open basis, in anticipation that the bill will be signed," he said.

The bill "was something we needed," Mustain added. "I think it will free up a lot of money in the area."

William F. St. Clair, president of the Columbia-based Boone National Savings and Loan Association, said he would meet later this week with other Boone National officials to discuss a hike in the mortgage rate in the wake of the new bill.

"I don't know all the particulars yet," St. Clair said.

Teasdale signs measure to raise interest limit

By Kingsley Hammett
State capital bureau

JEFFERSON CITY — Seated at a desk surrounded by smiling representatives of the real estate and lending industries, Gov. Joseph Teasdale signed into law Tuesday a usury bill that lifts the limits on interest rates on home mortgages and other loans.

Calling the bill a controversial one that was hotly debated during the course of the recent legislative session, the governor said signing it had become an "economic necessity."

"It's not a perfect bill," he said. "There's no such thing. But the plusses and minuses balance enough for me to sign it."

The bill will allow the interest on home mortgage loans to "float" at up to three percentage points above that of the federal long-term bond rate. In today's market, that would mean a mortgage loan could go as high as 11.6 percent.

With Missouri's mortgage ceiling set at 10 percent, forcing investors to place their money outside the state, the home building and real estate sales businesses had been severely limited in recent months. The little money that was available for home purchase generally

(See INTEREST, Page 11A)

Nonetheless, he predicted, "We'll go up to 10.75 (percent), maybe as high as 11 (percent)."

"We no doubt will (raise our rate)," said Jack Brown, manager of the Columbia branch of the Farm and Home Savings Association. "But I don't know by how much."

Local realtor and home builders also reacted favorably to passage of the bill.

"Why, we're tickled about it," said Chris Rasmussen of Century 21 Aspen Realty. "The interest rate ceiling has really been hurting the builders. It has affected a lot of industries, and it has kept a lot of people from going ahead and purchasing homes."

Cubans increase aid to Sandinistas

By Graham Heyes
New York Times

WASHINGTON — A recent United States intelligence analysis reports stepped-up Cuban aid to the Sandinist guerrillas in Nicaragua but also says Havana's policy is cautious and designed to avoid direct Cuban military participation and the risk of confrontation with Washington.

The analysis, which was made available Tuesday to The New York Times, said: "Given the low-key approach Cuba has employed in Central America, Havana is likely to do its best to avoid a situation where it might be called upon to intervene directly with its own military units and thus risk a military confrontation with the United States."

Thomas Reston, a State Department spokesman, confirmed the existence of the analysis last week but refused to discuss its content or to say where in the government's intelligence ap-

paratus it had originated.

Early news reports based on the document emphasized the parts dealing with Cuba's expansion of arms supplies and military training for Cuba for

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guerrillas from Nicaragua and other Central American countries beginning last fall.

But a recurring theme in the analysis is that Cuba is proceeding cautiously in Central America, warning the Sandinistas not to expect early victory in Nicaragua and admonishing its leftist allies in Guatemala not to mount an armed struggle prematurely.

"While optimistic that trends in Central America favor the left," the report says, "Havana has counseled patience and has urged its friends to prepare for a protracted struggle, even in Nicaragua." The report is dated May 3, less than a month before the Sandinistas opened their second major

offensive within a year against the national guard of President Anastasio Somoza Debayle.

When President Fidel Castro received the leaders of two Sandinist factions in Havana in September, the report says, "he reportedly counseled them to refrain from a frontal attack against the national guard." It goes on: "Instead, he urged them to concentrate on hit-and-run actions and other guerrilla activities."

Castro issued another warning last December, the report says, when he urged Sandinist leaders to abandon plans for a large-scale offensive because he thought they lacked "the necessary logistical and organizational capability to sustain conventional operations against the guard."

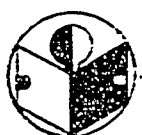
After twice making the point that Cuba would do its utmost to avoid a situation where it might be called upon to send Cuban forces to Nicaragua, the

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Day off

The Columbia Missourian will not publish Thursday morning so its employees can enjoy today's Independence Day holiday with their families. Regular publication will resume Friday.

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In town today

1 p.m. Columbia Fourth of July Celebration. University's Memorial Stadium. Admission free.
2 p.m. "L'Affaire du Fausset." Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre. \$3.50 for students, \$4 for others.
8 p.m. "Misalliance." Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre. \$3.50 for students, \$4.50 for others.

Thursday

8 p.m. Free film, "Days and Nights in the Forest." University Middlebush Auditorium.
8:15 p.m. "The Amorous Flea." University Theatre, Fine Arts Center, \$3.50 general admission.
8:15 "L'Affaire du Fausset." Arrow Rock Lyceum Theatre, \$3.50 for students, \$4.50 others.

Inside today

Connors gains



Jimmy Connors, for nearly two weeks the forgotten man of Wimbledon, pulled out a tough match from unseeded Bill Scanlon to set up a repeat semi-final duel with defending champion Bjorn Borg of Sweden. The two men have met in the past two finals, with Borg winning both. In the other semi-final, fifth-seeded Roscoe Tanner will meet a relative unknown, Pat DuPre, who defeated Italy's Adriano Panatta Tuesday. Story and a Wimbledon roundup on Page 6A.